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Letter dated 5 May 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the joint statement of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Countries Neighbouring Iraq at their eighth official meeting, which was held in Istanbul, on 29 and 30 April 2005, with the participation of the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Iraq, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the State of Kuwait, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Arab Republic of Syria and the Republic of Turkey, also as the host country (see annex).

The meeting was opened by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey.

Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, attended the meeting.

Amre Moussa, Secretary-General of the Arab League, and Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, participated in the meeting. The European Commission was also represented.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Baki **İlkin**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 5 May 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Joint statement of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the countries neighbouring Iraq at their eighth official meeting

İstanbul, 30 April 2005

Upon the invitation of Turkey, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs or Heads of Delegation of the countries neighbouring Iraq, as well as of Iraq, met in İstanbul, Turkey, on 29 and 30 April 2005, to assess the new situation in Iraq following the general elections that were held on 30 January 2005, and to extend their full support to the transition process.

The countries that participated at this ministerial meeting were the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Iraq, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the State of Kuwait, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Arab Republic of Syria and the Republic of Turkey.

The meeting was opened by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey.

Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, attended the meeting.

Amre Moussa, Secretary-General of the Arab League, and Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, participated in the meeting. The European Commission was also represented.

The Ministers and the Heads of Delegation:

1. Recalled their previous seven official and two informal meetings since the Regional Countries Initiative was launched in İstanbul on 23 January 2003, and reiterated their determination to work in concert for the freedom, peace and stability for Iraq.

2. Reaffirmed the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Iraq as well as the principles of non-interference in each other's internal affairs and good-neighbourliness.

3. Equally affirmed the right of the Iraqi people to determine freely their future and to exercise full national control over their natural and financial resources.

4. Welcomed in this respect the holding of the general elections on 30 January 2005, for the Transitional National Assembly and the subsequent election of the National Assembly Speaker, the President and the Presidential Council, the appointment of the Prime Minister and the formation as well as the endorsement of the Transitional Government. They pledged to support and cooperate with the newly elected Transitional National Government, and they reaffirmed their determination to promote Iraqi transition to a united, democratic and pluralistic state, with a federal structure if so decided by the Iraqi people.

5. Expressed their strong desire that these elected bodies will be fully instrumental in pursuing and completing the political transition in an inclusive,

transparent and democratic manner which will ensure effective participation of the entire spectrum of the Iraqi people in the political, economic and social rebuilding of Iraq.

6. Reiterated the importance of bringing to justice all those in the leadership of the previous Iraqi regime who have committed crimes against humanity to the Iraqi people and war crimes against Iran and Kuwait.

7. Expressed their hope that the momentum generated by the endorsement of the transition timetable by the United Nations Security Council in its resolution 1546 (2004) and the 30 January elections is maintained and the process is brought to its successful conclusion with the constitutional referendum and the new general elections that will follow.

8. Stressed the pivotal role the United Nations should play in this new phase where consensus-building and articulation of a unifying constitution by the Iraqis will become paramount.

9. Consequently agreed that the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) should serve as a focal point in receiving and processing political and donor assistance to the transition process.

10. Welcomed the increasing presence of the United Nations staff in Iraq also through the opening of provincial liaison offices, and expressed the necessity for the United Nations to establish itself more firmly and broadly on the ground in monitoring and assisting the political process and economic rehabilitation.

11. Expressed their strong support to the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq in carrying out his tasks.

12. Drew attention to the vital importance of fully establishing security and stability in Iraq and strongly condemned the terrorist acts aimed at the Iraqi people, the stabilization efforts, nascent Iraqi security forces, political and religious leaders and establishments, including holy sites, as well as foreign citizens and institutions providing assistance to and in economic interaction with Iraq.

13. Recalled that the mandate of the multinational force in Iraq is conditioned by the provisions of paragraphs 4 and 12 of the Security Council resolution 1546 (2004), according to which the Government of Iraq will decide on its termination, and expressed their strong expectation that the Iraqi security forces will soon be able to achieve the capacity and the level of readiness to fully take over the security responsibility in the country.

14. While reiterating their own commitment, called on all other interested countries to respond to the request of Iraq to train and support the Iraqi security forces in their rebuilding.

15. Noted the importance of the commitment of the multinational force to act in strict compliance with international humanitarian law, in particular the Geneva Conventions.

16. Expressed their determination, also in the light of the conclusions of the Meeting of the Interior Ministers of Iraq's Neighbours which was held on 30 November and 1 December 2004, in Tehran, to increase their cooperation on overall border security with Iraq, including effective monitoring of the borders, strict controls at border entry points and cross-border movements and exchange of

intelligence with Iraq, with the primary aim of stemming terrorist and other illegal infiltrations to and from Iraq.

17. Agreed, with this dedicated purpose, to convene the second Meeting of the Interior Ministers of the Neighbouring Countries in Turkey soon.

18. Further reiterated that the inviolability of these borders is a major requirement of international law and their full respect will serve as a significant confidence-building measure in their region's future.

19. Supported the efforts of the Transitional Government of Iraq to fulfil its responsibilities and expressed their conviction that, through the continuation of the political process, the Iraqi Government emerging from the nationally endorsed permanent constitution will live in peace with its neighbours, in compliance with all relevant bilateral and international commitments.

20. Reaffirmed their conviction that the Neighbouring Countries Initiative, which has now evolved into a well-established framework of regional coordination and cooperation, will continue to serve Iraq in its national rebuilding efforts and strengthen regional peace, stability and solidarity to ensure security in the area.

21. Welcomed the supportive role of the international community in Iraq's political transition, and, in this context, the institutional involvement of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Arab League and other regional and international organizations.

22. Expressed their satisfaction at the increasing international interest shown for Iraq through different formats such as the Sharm El Sheikh meeting held on 23 November 2004, and welcomed the prospective conference to assist Iraq that is expected to take place in Brussels next summer, and expressed their readiness to contribute to these multilateral undertakings.

23. Noted the request of Iraq for the cancellation or reduction of their sovereign debt.

24. Expressed their appreciation to Turkey for hosting this ministerial meeting.

25. Welcomed the invitation extended by the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the next Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Countries Neighbouring Iraq.